

National judgments the consequence of a
national profanation of the Sabbath.

A

SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

House of Commons,

A T

St. Margaret's, Westminster ;

On the 30th Day of January, 1741-2.

Being the Anniversary of the Martyrdom of King
CHARLES I.

*Did not our fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil
upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon
Israel, by profaning the sabbath, Nehemiah xiii. 18.*

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L O N D O N,

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Luna 1 Die Februarii, 1741-2.

Ordered,

THAT the thanks of this House be given to the Reverend Dr. *William Stukeley*, for the Sermon by him preached before this House, on *saturday* last, at St. *Margaret's, Westminster*, and that he be desired to print the same; and that Mr. *Vyner*, Mr. *Sydenham*, and Mr. *William Banks*, do acquaint him therewith.



N. HARDINGE,
Cl. Dom. Com.

Lamentations of Jeremiah, ii. 6.

*He hath violently taken away his tabernacle,
he hath destroyed his places of the assembly,
the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts
and SABBATHS to be forgotten in Zion,
and hath despised in the indignation of his
anger, the king and the priest.*

THIS book of the *Lamentations* is composed in meter, as many other of the sacred writings are. The *Hebrew* meter (which is the origin of all poetic composition) is not like that of the *Greek* and *Latin*, which consists of feet, nor of the Gothic sort, in riming, but is an artificial form of speech, sublime, magnificent, emphatical, and figurative, such as is peculiar and necessary to that kind of writing, and chiefly adapted to religious subjects.

THIS before us of the *Lamentations* is so contrived, that the verses begin with the letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet, in their order * : which was done for memory sake, and method of singing by parts; to be set to music and chanted in the church service. 'Tis a consummate piece of elegiac poetry; wherein the prophet bewails the miserable thralldom of his native country, from the *Babylonish* captivity, in the most moving and melancholy terms: Such as would inspire a savage breast with compassion, or affect the heart of the proudest conqueror.

* Every chapter therefore consists of 22 verses, according to the number of letters in the *Hebrew* alphabet: Except the third chapter consisting of 66, which is three times 22. Some of *David's* psalms of praise are framed after the like manner, particularly the xxxivth. and cxlvth.

No doubt the music it was set to, was equally pathetic and dolorous. For the *Hebrew* artists could apply the powerful sounds of music to occasions of grief, as well as those of joy and festivity. Thus in *Psalms* cxxxvii. wrote on the same occasion, *By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down; yea we wept: When we remembered thee, O Zion. We hanged our harps, upon the willows, in the midst thereof**.

WE find that the priests carried their musical instruments along with them, in their captivity, and *Nebemiah* again employed them, after their return, in religious offices. As we read in chap. xii. 27. *Cymbals, psalterys, harps, and singers*, are mentioned. We find too, in after times, in the gospel of St. *Matthew* ix. 23. when our Saviour restored the ruler's daughter to life, there were minstrels and music bewailing the death of the maid.

THIS book of *Lamentations* was wrote upon that aforementioned terrible calamity, which befel the *Jews*; the destruction of their city and temple, the captivity of the people, the murder of their king and princes, and an utter subversion of their whole polity, in church and state.

To explain a little, the words of our text. *He hath violently taken away his tabernacle*: That is, the LORD hath caused to be destroyed, the glorious and magnificent temple of *Jerusalem*, the most splendid edifice that ever stood upon earth: Built after the model of the *Mosaic* tabernacle, which was the origin of all covered temples. This was as the cathedral or metropolitical church of the kingdom, where they offered the daily morning and evening sa-

* They that compare this verse as here in the bible translation, with that as in the reading psalms, *By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept*, will understand the difference between *Hebrew* meter and prose: For this last is mere prose, whilst the other is wrote in a truly poetic style.

crifices, in behalf of the whole nation; and where the great and solemn feasts were kept, by the whole nation, at once assembled. This was the seat and immediate residence of *Jehovah*, in a visible appearance of a luminous cloud, called *Shechinah*, on the mercy seat.

HE hath destroyed his places of the assembly. That is, the LORD hath suffered to be destroyed, the synagogues and *proseuchæ* in every town or parish: Which we may call parish churches; where the people of that place ordinarily assembled on sabbath days.

THE LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and SABBATHS to be forgotten in Zion. That is, there was an absolute intermission, of all divine offices and church service, throughout the whole kingdom: Which lasted during their captivity.

AND hath despised, in the indignation of his anger, the king and the priest. Here by an elegant reduplication of the terms, *in the indignation of his anger*, the holy prophet means to aggravate in the last degree, the fierce anger of the LORD, who threw out of his hand, as it were, the king and the whole hierarchy. By these two he regards in general, the intire excision of church and state, as well as the particular history thereof. For he tells us, chap. xxxix. 6. that the *Babylonish* monarch slew king *Zedekiah's* sons before his eyes, together with all the nobles of *Judah*. Then he put out the king's eyes, bound him in chains, and carried him captive to *Babylon*. In chap. xxiv. 19. he tells them from the LORD, *The princes of Judah, the priests and all the people of the land, he will give into the hand of their enemies. And their dead bodies shall be for meat, unto the fowls of heaven, and to the beasts of the earth.*

SUCH was the dreadful catastrophe which befel the nation of the *Jews* for their sins: How nearly

resembling the melancholy solemnity of this day, the dire calamities, which we now commemorate ! This day of humiliation; whereof we may say with the prophet *Joel ii. 2. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains : A great people and a strong, a most powerful nation, which God had been pleased to redeem from the captivity of popery ; which he had fenced in, as his own peculiar, with the ocean ; which he had blessed with the free exercise of pure religion, governed by the gentle sway of a limited monarchy, abounding with all the comforts of indulgent heaven, rioting in civil and religious liberty, beyond any nation upon earth : This nation immersed in the ruin and havoc of a civil war !*

AT that time, as our SAVIOUR foretold of the siege of *Jerusalem, Mar. xiii. 12. The Brother betrayed the brother to death, and the father the son : And children rose up against their parents, and caused them to be put to death.*

AT that time, was such a scene of blood and devastation, of unnatural cruelty, so contrary to the genius of *Englishmen*, as scarce any history can parallel, but those two last mentioned, of the *Jews*. Our cathedrals were demolished, or plundered at least, and despoiled of all kind of furniture and ornament. Instead of religious offices performed therein, they were defecrated into stables, or garrisons of war, or prisons. The bishops and the ministers of parish churches ejected, fined, imprisoned. The ecclesiastical revenues usurped and alienated. The ordinances of the church, the order and decency of the administration in the beauty of holiness, profaned and derided ; then changed for an unhallowed rabble and rude licentiousness ; the necessary forms of religion, for formal hypocrisy.

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IN the state, all orders and degrees among men levelled. The antient families of nobility and gentry massacred or banished. Cities, towns, and palaces burnt or ravaged. The laws of the land torn up by the roots. The government and constitution absolutely subverted, and the king publickly murder'd, by the most atrocious parricide, the sun ever saw.

BUT I purpose not, my beloved brethren, to take up your time, in painting these images of horror and amazement, so unworthy of the dignity of human nature, which our forefathers saw and felt: And all had some share in the crimes that produced them. Nor shall I enter into a political disquisition, of the bounds between prince and people thrown down; nor point out who were most to be faulted, or rather describe the faults on both parts. A task that will little become me, in an auditory of *British* senators. I shall leave it to your better knowledge and discernment.

BUT, alas! it was not the little bickerings between parties, or the mutual inroads made on prerogative and rights, between the governor and governed; but national crimes, publick wickedness, an universal degeneracy from the fruits of Reformation, which brought down that fearful judgment of heaven upon us. We may well say with our prophet *Jeremiah* i. 5. of *Lamentations*: *For the LORD hath afflicted us, for the multitude of our transgressions.* 8. *Jerusalem hath grievously sinned.* And with *Amos* iii. 6. *Shall there be evil in the city, and the LORD hath not done it?* And with *Isaiab* xlv. 7. *I make peace and create evil, I the LORD do all these things.*

LET us then, as better becomes us, turn our thoughts, to consider that dark period of our annals, as a national punishment; and investigate the use and doctrine to be deduced from it, suitable to the
mournful

mournful occasion, that calls us together at this time. Wherein we may find out the source of the woes we now lament, that we and our posterity may not suffer for them, or again be involved in the like calamities, or other national chastisement.

HE hath violently taken away his tabernacle, he hath destroyed his places of the assembly, the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised, in the indignation of his anger, the king and the priest.

NATIONAL judgments are the necessary consequents of national sins, consequents in a moral and even philosophical sense: As sure as natural causes produce their effects. But that for order and method, we may reduce our discourse at this time, to some general head; from the whole tenor of the scriptures, nay from common reason itself, as well as not unaptly from these words, we may gather this one proposition, "That the sum of all temporal calamities which can befall a nation, is owing to the neglect of the public profession of religion or national duty of the *Sabbath*." A consideration of this proposition, in as concise a manner as possible, will take up our present time, and may, as I conceive, be usefully adapted to the great purpose of this assembly. I shall endeavour to treat on the subject, in the following manner.

I. To show the utility and expediency of the duty of the *sabbath*, as to the moral obligation thereof, to peace, publick safety and good government; to the temporal prosperity of the state.

II. To show the divine sanction of the *sabbath*, and the universal obligation thereof.

III. By way of application, that the felicity of a nation in general, absolutely depends upon the care of the legislature, in making and executing such

such laws, as regard the public profession of religion, or duty of the sabbath.

I. I PROPOSE to show the utility and expediency of the sabbath duty, to peace and good government to the temporal prosperity of the state; as to the moral obligation thereof, as it may be styled a law of nature.

IF gratitude to a benefactor, an acknowledgment of favours, a return of service, for good received, be a moral law and natural duty; that of the sabbath must needs be one. If we have received life and the good things thereof, from the hands of an almighty father, then prayer and thanksgiving to him is necessarily due.

NOTHING can be affirmed more reasonable, than that we should devote some part of our time, to him that gave us our being, all our time.

PRAYER is of two kinds, public and private. Private prayer is an indispensable duty from every private person, every individual, as he receives the private and family blessings of life: A daily tribute of gratitude for daily bread. As long as our pulse beats, and heart makes our blood to flow, private prayer is due to him, that made for us this wondrous machine of the body, that daily preserves and sustains it.

BUT this is not enough. We are not only private persons, and participate of the good things which God gives us, either by birth or acquisition, but we are moreover parts of the publick. Mankind can't subsist without society. We build towns, cities, and make parishes, or a collection of families: We form communities, states and governments, for mutual security, and happiness: Whereby we are protected in our persons and possessions, live comfortably, sociably, and like rational creatures,

tures, as becomes us. This state of life therefore requires publick prayer, or the duty of the sabbath.

PUBLICK prayer or sabbath is the congregation of God's faithful people, met together in a publick and known place, for that purpose, and at a certain and appointed time; to pour forth their prayers and praises, to the king of heaven, to make intercession for the whole community to which they belong: To implore his favours upon them as a nation, as well as to themselves particularly: To sing psalms of thanksgiving and gratitude for the publick blessings bestowed on their nation: Such as peace and plenty, fruitful seasons, safety from enemies, invasions, pestilential distempers, and the like: To thank him for good and excellent kings, princes, and governors; wise, religious, valiant, merciful, fathers of their people, and such like dispensations of God's bountiful hand, to the common weal.

THIS is the duty of morality, and law of nature, which binds us, as the subjects of one king, as parts of the public. Therefore 'tis of perpetual obligation, and founded on the nature of things; unless we can prove our selves all-sufficient, and that we owe nothing to divine providence. This is not a slight matter, to be passed over with indifference, a thing which a man may execute as he pleases, as he is in the humour, and has most leisure and opportunity: But 'tis absolutely and indispensably necessary. 'Tis a crime to the publick, to neglect it, as well as an affront against almighty God. Therefore lies directly under the cognizance and animadversion of the legislature, and civil magistrate, by unavoidable consequence.

WHOEVER then neglects the duty of the sabbath, is as much guilty of the breach of a law, of a moral
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commandement, as he that steals, that murders, that commits adultery. They are all founded on the same principle. And the magistrate who is intrusted with the executive part of the law, who neglects it in his own example, or in punishing the neglect of it in others, is as much culpable, as to let those other enormous crimes go unpunished.

THE reason of the thing is very evident in another light. The person who neglects the sabbath withdraws himself from his share of the blessings, which God continues weekly to dispense toward that nation. He has no real right to them, as he has not contributed toward obtaining them. And tho' he enjoys these blessings, in common with the other good subjects, yet he is no true subject, but ought to be looked on as an excrescence only of the government. He is criminal to the public as well as to God almighty, in such his neglect.

NOR is there any reason to expect, that a man who is ungrateful and disobedient to God, should be more careful of his duty to his king and country, to his neighbour, or in any office of life.

BUT to carry this matter still further, upon the supposition that the law of the sabbath was only arbitrary and political, or has no higher a foundation than that of canon or common law, or of an act of parliament. It must be acknowledged to be wise in the highest degree, infinitely beneficial to the public weal, as it affords an opportunity to mankind, weekly to learn, to have the duties of morality inculcated to them, to have the ten commandments thundered in their ears. That they may be reminded of their duty to God, their neighbour and themselves, to their king and country. And all this, in respect of the generality and much the greatest part of the world, is absolutely necessary. For how

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should they know what is criminal, unless they be taught? 'Tis true, the voice of nature will do somewhat toward it, but few there are philosophers and thinking people, or able to attend to the most obvious truths of this sort, especially, when a corrupt nature operates against them.

IF sufficient care was taken of this matter, executions would not be so frequent among us. Our lives and properties not so precarious, whilst children and the inferior part of mankind, instead of having religious duties impressed on their minds, by frequenting the church (which is of much stronger influence, than the terrors of the law) either through their own inclination, or their masters negligence, live a life utterly devoid of all moral knowledge. And a most melancholy truth it is, though laughed at by some licentious people, that the poor unhappy wretches, who die by the iron hand of justice, as justly as constantly, charge the origin of all their misfortunes, to the breach of the sabbath. Whereby so many miserable creatures lose their lives, the community loses so many subjects, and incurs so much danger.

THEREFORE if we would have life a real blessing, and that we may pass our days here safely and comfortably, there cannot be a better precept to the public than this, keep the sabbath.

THUS then we have considered this affair, as a civil and political duty, what a wise state would command to be observed, for the manifest benefits and advantages accruing therefrom: Or rather from the necessity of it.

II. WE come in the second place to shew the institution of the sabbath to be a matter really sacred, of a divine sanction, and made universally obligatory, by the author of all things.

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To prove the divine institution of the sabbath, I am confident, my beloved brethren, I need not be elaborate in a christian assembly. But because sometimes the most important truths are not seriously attended to, give me leave to observe, that there are some learned men and good christians, who have taken the institution of the sabbath, to be a matter merely judaical: A part of the ceremonious yoke, laid upon that stiff-necked people, to contain them in duty by force, which good usage could not do. That christian liberty was not necessarily concerned in it, any farther, than as it may be a moral and useful ordinance, to be left to the discretion of government.

BUT this opinion lessens much the intrinsic and essential obligation thereof, and is certainly ill founded; as I shall shew by these two short and plain considerations.

I. THE opinion of these gentlemen is this. That the sabbath said in scripture, to be instituted at the time of creation, is added by *Moses* (who wrote for the sake of the *Jewish* church) by way of anticipation only; and to prepare for the introduction of this law, with greater advantage, among the other truly moral ones, of the decalogue, or ten commandments. But to confute this opinion, let us observe,

IN every act of parliament, there is, what we call, the preamble, which contains the intent and motive, the reason of making that act. Now it would be a most rude affront, an impeachment of the wisdom of the legislature, to say, that they have made an absurd, or inconclusive preamble to their act, one which is not to the purpose, or which is a false reason. And assuredly it would be the same affront, to affirm the like of God almighty, the su-

preme Legislator : Whether *Moses* or any of us should presume to say it. Therefore to set this matter in the clearest light, let us have recourse to the original law : *Exod. xx.* where 'tis more emphatically expressed, than in our common prayer books*.

8. *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

9. *Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work.*

10. *But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God.*

11. *For in six days, the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is : And rested the seventh day : Wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

HERE we find expressly, as words can make it, the reason, or preamble, why God enacted this law, and *that* wholly referring to the work of creation; consonant to that of *Genesis ii. 3.* *And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it : because that in it, he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.* Because the seventh day is God's sabbath or rest, from making the world; therefore in imitation of himself, he will have it to be made sabbath, or rest, not to the *Jews*, not to any one nation, but to all mankind.

'TIS childish here to object, that if this reason was valid, we ought to keep *saturday*, not *sunday*. We shall not enter into a disquisition, whether it be true or no, what some very learned men have advanced; that the original patriarchal sabbath was really *sunday*, not *saturday*, and therefore restored in christianity. Sufficient it is for us at present to observe, that the morality of the sabbath does not consist in the day, but in the assignment of a se-

* Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day : Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, *Deut. v. 12.*

venth part of our time to holy uses, to the business of the sabbath.

BUT from what we before advanced, concerning the preamble of the law itself, we may demand; can any one be so imprudent, to say no worse of it, as to tell us another reason for this commandment, than what is asserted? That it was not statuted in regard to creation, but in regard to the children of *Israel*, 2500 years after? Who will make *Moses* a liar, much less God almighty: As if they should declare a false and contradictory reason for this law? Therefore we lay this down as an undeniable conclusion, that the ivth commandment in the decalogue, is a divine law, as old as the creation, was promulgated to the whole world, and of universal obligation.

2. I INFER the same conclusion from this second consideration. The sabbath duty is the life, the soul, the very essence of religion. The sabbath duty is properly religion: 'Tis practical religion. Religion is not a theoretical and speculative thing, but is matter of practice. And therefore those good men the patriarchs, who lived before *Moses*, were perfect in their generations, *Gen. xvii. Hebrews xi. &c.* and were accepted of by God, most assuredly observed the sabbath, from the beginning of the world, because it was commanded from the beginning of the world. Therefore the edict from mount *Sinai*, was but a republication of it.

'TIS very remarkable, that in scripture we find not the institution of sacrifices, tho' the practice of it was universal, was accepted of by God, for the remission of sins, *Levit. xvii. 11. Heb. ix. 7, 13.* So the practice of the sabbath among the patriarchs, happens not to be mentioned in express terms, though the injunction thereof is wrote in largest characters,
Genes.

Genes. ii. 3. as large as the creation of the universe. But as in one case, we infer the divine institution of sacrifices from the patriarchal practice : So by a like consequence not to be disputed, 'tis just to conclude, those good men, beloved of God, observed the sabbath, because it was commanded by God.

THEREFORE those people miserably deceive themselves, that would spirit away the sabbath as a Mosaic precept only. It was assuredly the patriarchal practice from the beginning of the world. But being neglected in time, through the devil's deceit and the corrupt will of mankind, God almighty thought fit to proclaim it afresh with the terrific pomp of mount *Sinai*. This difference indeed there was between the patriarchal and jewish sabbath, that whoever desecrated the latter, was immediately put to death, as we read, *Exod xxxi. 14. xxxv. 2.* The commandment was confirmed and continued in our Saviour's republication of the patriarchal religion and delivered to the christian church. Whence *Isaiab*, chap. lvi. proclaiming the advent of *Messiah*, declares him *blessed, that keepeth the sabbath*. It was the first law of heaven, and must be continued to the final rest and jubilee of the saints, *the sabbatism* (as 'tis in the original) mentioned *Hebrews iv. 9.* the eternal heavenly sabbath^a.

PRACTICE is the life of any profession, institution, art or science. A man may study or learn the knowledge of any art, but he can reap no fruit from it, without practice. Therefore 'tis to no purpose, to talk of piety and virtue, of charity, honesty, morality, and the like ; our Saviour informs

* "Αγα ἀπολείπεται σαββατισμός τῷ λαῷ τῷ Θεῷ, *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

us, that we are to be known by our fruits. The rest are only names, unless brought into act, and on a true foundation, conformable to God's commands. A man can neither learn his duty rightly, nor do it rightly, but by making his regular and constant approaches to God's house. Much the greatest part of mankind want to be taught, the wisest and best of us may still learn; and to all of us, 'tis absolutely necessary to pay our weekly adoration, at the throne of grace, in the midst of the congregation of the faithful.

HENCE it is, that as this duty includes the whole practice of religion: The word sabbath is sometimes taken in scripture, to mean the whole week, as particularly *Luke xviii. 12. I fast twice in the week* *, 'tis sabbath in the original. Sometimes 'tis taken to signify all religious festivals in general, all great and solemn assemblies, as in *Levit. xxiii. 35, 39.* where the first day of the week, and the eighth day are called sabbaths; in the 24th verse, the first day of the seventh month is called sabbath, because the great feast of trumpets. And in *Levit. xxv. 4.* every whole seventh year is called a sabbath. So we read throughout the bible, that the sabbath is used as a general name, as an external action, comprehending the intire system of religion.

'TIS further highly worthy of our particular remark, that in the second chapter of *Genesis*, wherein the paradisiacal state is represented, between the history of creation and that of our fatal lapse: We have only an account of the institution of the sabbath, and the institution of matrimony. Therein *Moses*, as a most sublime and excellent writer, who uses great conciseness in matters of so high anti-

* Νηστία δις τῷ σαββάτῳ, *I fast twice in the sabbath.*

quity,

quity, comprehends the promulgation of all laws divine and human, all that relates to religion, and all that relates to civil policy.

THE ordinance of the sabbath means the institution of religion, that of matrimony includes all government : Because 'tis the foundation of families, towns, cities, states, and kingdoms, the origin of civil, social, and rational life. These two joined together in one *compositum*, and each properly adjusted, make up a state or a government, as soul and body united, make up a man.

III. THEREFORE, to make some application. in the third place, of what has been said ; we must shew, that the felicity of a nation absolutely depends upon the care of the legislature, in making and executing, such laws as regard the publick profession of religion, or duty of the sabbath, equally as in making such laws as regard the civil community.

THIS indeed is the consequence of all that has been said, and requires but little illustration. If we believe, that God who has displayed all possible marks of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, in the formation of the natural world, should have any care and regard for the moral world : If we believe the natural world was made for the sake of mankind : If we believe any religion necessary among men. Hence then justly we find the neglect of the sabbath, as including all religion, theory, and practice, is assigned for the adequate cause of that terrible calamity mentioned in our text, the utter ruin of the Jewish constitution in church and state : Like that national judgment, which we this day deplore. God almighty by his holy prophets, in many places of scripture, expressly declares it : And that he proportioned the time of the *Babylonish* captivity, as weighed in the just balance of heaven, exactly

exactly to the quantity of their neglecting the sabbatical duties, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. *Nehem. x. 31.*

LIKEWISE in their return from the captivity, we find the prophet *Nehemiah x. 31. xiii. 15, 19, 22.* complaining again of this evil, and guarding against it with all his might, as the fountain of their former woe. *In those days saw I in Judah, some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses: As also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day, and I testified against them, in the day wherein they sold victuals.*

16. *There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath, unto the children of Judah and in Jerusalem.*

17. *Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day*?*

WE may observe the same parallel too nearly adjusted, to the practice of our ancestors in this nation, an hundred years ago; a high neglect of the sabbath; sports and pastime, games, exercises then practised under publick authority. That very book of sports, by judicious historians, has been thought to be the source and fountain of that deluge of misery, which God thought fit to bring upon us by the great rebellion: Wherein the church of *England* and the monarchy were ruined, by an uncouth union of the sectaries, whose only merit seems to have been a strict observance of the sabbath. And would to God, there was, on our part, no room to wish, that we should learn of them still, in that particular!

* The prophet contended with the nobles, the judges, magistrates, and great men, who alone were capable of reforming this fearful abuse.

'Tis but too obvious, how we, at this time are laps'd again into the same egregious wickedness: And so much the worse, as one kind of it, that of travelling on *sundays*, so fashionable among the higher rank, being a thing public and notorious, hurts as much by example, as it is intrinsically criminal. Instead of being a day of holy rest, 'tis become, as it were, the statutable day of diversion, visits, and parties of pleasure. But sin is of an infectious nature. It spreads like a plague or conflagration. 'Tis sure to triumph, when it becomes fashionable, it gathers strength by running, and knows no bounds.

AND see the consequences of all this in the holy prophet *Nebemiah*, remonstrating from the judgment past, to that which was to be expected, *xiii. 18. Did not our fathers thus, and did not God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet you bring more wrath upon Israel, by profaning the sabbath.*

REMEMBER, O ye magistrates, parents, masters, and governors, whoever have any authority over others, that you are culpable for all the crimes of your servants and dependants, for the ill actions of their lives; who by your example, or by otherwise employing them, rob them of the true use of the Lord's day, the frequenting the assembly of the saints. All your domestics, all your creatures of labour, have a divine right and prescription on that day, to rest from servile work.

IT may perhaps be objected to the doctrine here advanced, that the great and powerful nations of old, the kingdoms of the earth, flourish'd without any sabbatical observance. To which I could give an answer largely: But at present, only remark what is sufficient. This argument of the objectors proves too much, if it proves any thing. I might with better authority pronounce, that all the great and powerful

erful nations of old, are sunk and perished, for want of that observance. The *Assyrian, Persian, Macedonian, Syrian, Egyptian, Roman* monarchies are dissolved. Those very powers made use of by God almighty to punish the *Jews*, from time to time, for this very fault, are in their turns, fallen the like victims of national crimes, for want of a sabbath. As our prophet among others, repeatedly foretold, *Jerem. xxv. 12, 19, 20, &c. l, li, throughout.*

1. THE hebdomadal division of time obtaining throughout the whole world, from the beginning of any accounts we have in history, proves the command for sanctifying one day in seven, as old as the beginning: Though the sacredness of that day became lost or neglected. Again, suppose the nations never had, or had forgot the sanctity of one day in a week, and that *Moses* either first published, or republished this law, to his people; if we well weigh the great wisdom of the institution, both in a moral and a religious view, we cannot but think it a noble evidence of the divine mission of the great *Hebrew* Legislator. And if that be allow'd, it equally proves my first assumption. For if *Moses* was a man of God, and wrote by the holy Spirit of God, then the institution of the sabbath, immediately after creation, is true, as he has represented it.

2. WAR, devastation and blood, unkindly seasons, frosts, droughts, and overflowing of waters, fires and tempests, poverty, scarcity, a popular murmuring and uneasiness, at this time appear like a scourge held up in God's hand, to reclaim us from the publick neglect of practical religion. But besides domestic dangers, besides those terrors of the Lord which we have been sensible of here; in our days is arisen a political comet, of a hideous size, upon the *European* horizon, which has drawn in well nigh, all

the kingdoms of the continent, into his fiery train. This popish *Babylon* too near us, like the great red dragon in the *Revelations* ch. xii. yawns to devour us. From your wisdom alone, under God, depend the liberties of a third part of the earth. Vain is it to talk of reforming national profanations, whereby we may ward off the impending blow of divine judgment, without the secular arm, the helping hand of government.

WE of the ministry cannot apply a remedy to this threatening mischief. This of all enormities eludes the warmest zeal of the preacher. *How shall they call on God, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, who attend not on the preacher?* Rom. x. 14. How shall they know religion or common morality, who never approach God's house? They cannot expect God's holy Spirit to illuminate, to lead and guide them, but by asking it, but by seeking where he is to be found. This is like the sin against the holy Ghost, incurable, because it prevents a remedy.

BUT to make this and all your other cares for the public good successful, let us apply by a reformation of our manners, to the divine assistance, and cry out with *Nehemiah* ix. 31. on the like occasion, *Nevertheless, for thy great mercy sake, consume us not utterly, nor forsake us, for thou art a merciful God.*

32. Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that came upon us, on our king, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people: Since the time of the kings of Assyria, unto this day.

33. How

33. *Howbeit thou art just, in all that was brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.*

34. *Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers kept thy law, nor hearkned unto thy commandments.*

3. LET us then in this day of humiliation, with great contrition of heart, with the utmost prostration of mind and body, deprecate that vengeance due to the crimes of our ancestors, and that barbarous murder of the royal martyr, as on this day perpetrated; which our church calls upon us now to make an atonement for. And let us take the advice of our blessed Saviour *to sin no more, lest a worse evil come upon us. For unless we repent, we shall all likewise perish.* And principally to you it belongs, to provide for a punctual observation of the Lord's day: Which is practical religion. 'Tis that alone which can again raise up the drooping spirit of religion among us, which is the complement of all human felicity. 'Tis that which brings down the blessings of heaven; rather, which brings down heaven upon earth.

'TIS our part and duty, *to call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, Isa. lviii. 13.* not to turn it into a day of business, or of diversion, but rightly to celebrate it to the honour and service of the great creator, according to its intention from the creation. *Then righteousness and peace shall kiss each other; truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven: Yea, the LORD shall give us all that is good, and our land shall yield her increase.*

THEN will God continue us a flourishing people for the benefit of his church and the protestant religion in general; the great bulwark against popery
and

and arbitrary power. For this we have the firmest assurance, even divine authority, in the words of our prophet *Jeremiah* xvii. 19. with which I shall conclude.

THUS saith Jehovah unto me, Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem.

20. *AND* say unto them, bear ye the words of Jehovah, ye kings of Judah and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates.

24. *IF* ye diligently bearken unto me, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city, on the sabbath day: But hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein.

25. *THEN* shall there enter into the gates of this city, kings and princes, sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses: They and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city shall remain for ever.

GOD grant this to our Zion, for the sake and through the merits alone, of our blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*: To whom, with the eternal Father, and most holy Spirit be ascribed, as is most justly due, all possible honour and glory, might, majesty and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen.*



F I N I S.